1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

181 is pre-eminently a social phenomenon: it obtains essentially
527 during festivals, which are community events; it derives from
[535] a festive atmosphere, which only the assembled community can create; and it reaches its community-centered peak as throngs of men and women form a large dancing circle, men and women alternating so that each one has a member of the opposite sex on each side, hands joined together. While I am sensible of anthropological naïveté, the remarks and demeanor of the Santal on such occasions leave little doubt that such performances are a potent source as well as a reflection of community solidarity. During and just after such dancing there is generally great camaraderie, and everyone exchanges cigarettes and rice beer while moving about from one house to another.

527 Although it is above all village solidarity which such festivals
628 enhance and reflect, they also draw together the members of a particular village and Santal from as far as thirty miles away. The Santal are aware of the attraction of the drums and in many regions festivals are celebrated at slightly different times by nearby villages so that one can participate in several, and
181 so that reciprocity becomes possible. "Pleasure," as the Santal
619 understand the term, is a shared understanding which creates
648 immediate bonds with co-tribals wherever they may be from, and, like many other more official boundary-marking symbols of solidarity, also binds the Santal to the neighboring Mundari tribes; it is not uncommon to find some members of several of these tribes participating in any particular Santal festival. To
[273] be sure it is also possible to see drunken men quarreling at a
[578] Santal festival, and other signs of discord, but this will be discussed later.

619 The Santal origin myth validates the kinship ties between all Santal and thereby provides a basis for such unity as the Santal

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

Chapter 2 External Solidarity

000 The "likenesses" of a particular people not only contribute to internal bonds of solidarity, but by virtue of their distinctiveness may also serve as a barrier against assimilation in surrounding societies. The more distinctive these likenesses, the more inconsistent with the culture of the surrounding societies, the better they serve to preserve solidarity.

181 The chief traits which have divided the Santal from their predominantly Hindu neighbors are the "pleasure" complex mentioned earlier and the practices of cow sacrifice and beef
535 eating. Among the practices associated with the pleasure complex the most conspicuous are public mixed dancing such as occurs at festivals and the drinking of rice beer, as well as its
• 648 ritual use. The Hindus regard Santal mixed dancing as an orgy,
[535] although it is in fact no more promiscuous than Western mixed dancing and is certainly less sensuous than much of Hindu classical dancing. As for cow sacrifice and beef eating, the stringency of the Hindu attitude is well known; on many occa-
171 sions armed force has been used to halt both. It is again significant that these distinctive traits are shared by the other

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 563 171 As early as the sixteenth century a Munda tribal in the Ranchi district established himself as a local Rājā.[3] By virtue of his wealth and power he attracted reputable Brahmans to his court who Sanskritized his rituals and manufactured for him a Rājput genealogy. Eventually this status was accepted by other Rājputs and marriage ties were established.

177 563 There are numerous other examples, and the Santal themselves have undergone considerable Hindu acculturation and some fission and Hindu assimilation though not nearly to the same degree or in such large numbers as the Bhumij. Hindu-tribal contact in the region has been long and intense. All the tribes in the area have been heavily influenced by Hindu culture, some have been partially and others totally absorbed in the Hindu social order and no doubt many Hindu castes have been so recruited in instances where the historical record is unknown. Why the Bhumij have been assimilated and the Santal, Munda, Ho, and some others have not must be understood by reference to particular historical differences which are beyond the scope of this investigation. However, the examination of Santal historical experience does shed light on the general conditions which are relevant to assimilation as well as on the specific historical events which were crucial to the Santal experience.

175 648 669 Perhaps the single most important event in the history of Santal-Hindu relations was the Santal rebellion of 1855–57. This major public event, which first drew the serious attention of India's English rulers to the Santal, reveals at once the nature of Santal-Hindu relations and the strengths and limitations of Santal solidarity. Commemorated in Santal songs and

[3] Roy 1912.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

discussions, it is part of the Santal living cultural heritage and hence of continuing influence.

Various investigations of the rebellion support Man's conclusion that the following four Santal grievances were chiefly responsible for the rebellion: (1) "grasping and rapacious money lenders"; (2) "personal and hereditary debt bondage"; (3) "corruption and extortion by police helping moneylenders"; (4) "impossibility of Santal getting court redress" (Man 1867: from Culshaw and Archer 1945). A fifth contributing factor of an endogenous nature is what Man describes as Santal "improvidence."[4] Leaving aside Man's pejoratives, there is abundant evidence that his understanding of the rebellion was substantially correct. By legal and extra-legal means the Santal were systematically being stripped of their ownership rights over their land and becoming tenants and even slaves of Hindus who knew how to manipulate the law and were accustomed to gaining their ends in the context of the market.

The Santal felt themselves exploited, and not without cause. The emphasis in their culture on "redistribution"[5] and other leveling mechanisms plus their heavy commitment to "pleasure" made the Santal easy prey of the merchant and moneylender. To the British observers and to the Hindus the Santal were "improvident." Ultimately the Santal erupted in a violent revolt during which they mutilated a number of Hindu moneylenders and took vengeance on guilty and innocent alike. One reads of a Hindu money lender whose limbs were severed one

[4] See Datta 1940 for the most complete bibliography of relevant primary documents.

[5] Polanyi 1957.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

175 at a time to signify payment of four annas on the rupee, an
• 648 annual interest rate of twenty-five per cent.•
669 The rebellion was not begun on the spur of the moment as a result of sudden passion. The Santal had made many attempts to present their grievances to the government but were rebuffed for various reasons and by various means. Numerous meetings and communications between Santal villages preceded armed
[726] revolt. In spite of the lack of any formal political structure wider than the Pargana, and equipped only with bow and arrow and ax, the Santal were able to overrun all local opposition and even to defeat a crack unit of British-led troops in one skirmish. After intermittent battles lasting over a year the Santal were finally defeated with heavy losses, their rebellious leaders were executed or sent to prison, and the revolt gradually ceased.

[539] Confirmation of official findings and an "inside view" of the rebellion is conveyed by such enduring songs as the following:

> Sido, why are you bathed in blood?
> Kanhu,• why do you cry *hul hul*?†
> For our people we have bathed in blood
> For the merchant thieves have robbed us of our land.[7]
>
> Saheb rule is trouble full;
> Shall we go or shall we stay?
> Eating, drinking, clothing,
> For everything we are troubled.
> Shall we go or shall we stay?[8]

• Culshaw and Archer 1945.
• Sido and Kanhu were the two brothers who led the revolt.
† *Hul* = rebellion.
[7] Archer 1945:207.
[8] Culshaw and Archer 1945:218.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

175 Though the Santal demands which preceded the rebellion
• 648 were limited to relieving their economic plight, the preparations
669 for the rebellion and certain events during its course suggest a more radical intent. For example, two brothers, Sido and Kanhu, proclaimed to their fellow Santal that they had supernaturally received a message to worship *Suba Thakur* (Hindi = Head of a District), presumably a deity associated with the political leadership of a District on the analogy of traditional Santal village and Pargana deities; the brothers claimed that *Suba Thakur* had urged them to lead the Santal people in a rebellion. They announced "We will kill and make an end of all the Deko,* rule ourselves, and whoever does not listen, show him a sword."[9] As the author of a settlement report put it, "A deeper or at any rate a supervening cause [for the rebellion] was the Sonthal yearning for independence, a dream of the ancient days when they had no overlords."[10]

At least those who led the rebellion foresaw in victory not only economic relief but increased political power and an opportunity to improve the rank of the Santal. The goal of rank improvement is suggested by a number of ritual practices emulative of Hindu customs which accompanied the rebellion, such as putting on the sacred thread, ritual use of sun-dried rice and oil and vermilion, and purification with cow dung.[11] While wishing to triumph over the oppressive Hindus, the Santal thought of cashing in on the victory with the traditional Hindu symbols of rank. This ambivalence toward the Hindus is a constant characteristic of Santal-Hindu relations.

[192]

* *Deko*, or *Diku*, as it is pronounced in the south, is a term of opprobrium for foreigners, particularly Hindus.

[9] Culshaw and Archer.1945:2.

[10] McPherson from Culshaw and Archer, *ibid.*

[11] Culshaw and Archer 1945.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

The Santal

175 The 1855–57 rebellion had its center in the District of Santal
• 648 Pargana and extended westward into Bhagalpur and southeast-
669 ward into Birbhum, which at the time were districts of Bengal. Though the rebellion did not directly involve the southern Santal living in the princely states, songs and stories about it did filter south. In 1832 a rebellion had occurred further to the south in the Ranchi District; it probably involved several tribal peoples, especially the Munda.[12] The southern Santal of Seraikela have a tradition of a rebellion having occurred in the latter part of the nineteenth century. They and the rest of the southern Santal, including those of Mayurbhanj, tell a story of two men, sometimes said to be brothers, named Diba and Kisun, whose exploits parallel those of the northern heroes, Sido and Kanhu:

[539] They had such power that within their boundaries no horse could pass; they achieved power from the deities; they were from Matkombeda, a village in Seraikela; they fought against the Rājā; they shot red-hot arrows; they were finally caught; both were of the Soren clan; they were against the government; the government collected many kinds of rent and taxes; Diba said, 'My goats were carried away by a fox, why does the State not give me compensation; my chickens were carried away by a crow, why does the State not give me compensation; the State does nothing so why should the people pay rent and taxes to the State.'

It is said that the children of Diba are still living, and one old man of about sixty claimed that Diba was his sister's father-in-law. Many Parganas are said to have joined the rebellion, but

[12] Thornton 1843.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

175 it is difficult to estimate the territory involved from the information I obtained.
• 648
669

Though the rebellions of both the northern and southern Santal were unsuccessful, they did draw attention to the plight of the Santal and thus led to enactment of some partially ameliorative judicial and administrative reforms. At the same time, the Santal must have recognized after these defeats that under prevailing conditions, increased political power and improvement in rank were not to be obtained by military might. Evidence to be presented later suggests that this recognition contributed to a decline in solidarity.

173 The dream of ancient days of independence, which, as has been seen, antedated the rebellions, is a kind of dream which 648 is continually nourished by the character of Santal-Hindu social relations. Santal mythology of the nineteenth century and the present is replete with allusions to former days of independence and glory. One favorite myth reported in the nineteenth century and still prevalent describes a mighty kingdom which the Santal once constituted. Each clan had a specialized function, like that of a Hindu caste: the Kisku were kings, the Murmu priests, the Soren warriors, etc.[13] The Santal are thus pictured as independent, powerful, and constituted exactly in the image of an ideal Hindu kingdom. Like all current dreams of the past, this myth expresses current interests. It says that "we were once great as the Hindus presently are." Though serving as a charter for present independence and improved rank, like the emulative symbols of the rebellion, it is Hindu greatness which is sought.

According to mythological history, the Santal were continu-

[13] Bodding 1942:10.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

173 ally forced to flee the areas where they settled. "As soon as we
• 648 have cleared the jungle in any country, the Deko come and rob us of it. Still if the Sahabs nowadays did not help them, we should soon drive them to the other side of the Ganges."[14]

A myth concerned with the days before the rebellion refers to the differential emulation of the rich and powerful which has been previously mentioned. It describes the Santal as fleeing from a place called Champa to Saont, where their Rājās adopted Hindu religious practices and set themselves up as Rājputs, intermarrying with a local Rājput family. But according to mythology the people would not follow their converted Rājā and therefore fled to Santal Parganas. Another version of the myth tells of the daughter of a Kisku king who had intercourse with someone of another tribe. The illegitimate child of this union grew up to become the chief advisor of the Kisku king, who sought to arrange a Santal marriage; the Santal people refused, and the king, in anger, threatened to defile all of their daughters by forcibly applying vermilion to their upper forehead and in the central part of their hair—a still acceptable way of obtaining a wife by capture. Rather than submit to such a marriage most of the Santal fled Champa.[15] Thus Santal mythology defends solidarity in the face of the emulation and Hindu social claims of some of its leaders.

177 Nevertheless, the defeat of the Santal rebellion of 1855–57
795 appears to have led to increased Hinduization, perhaps in part because the path to higher rank through military force seemed closed. Soon after the rebellion the Kherwar movement developed among the northern Santal. Those who joined this Hindu-

[14] Bodding 1942:10.
[15] Bodding *ibid.*

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

ized sect adopted a number of critical Hindu symbols of rank, such as wearing the sacred thread. They were said to "regard themselves as socially superior to those who do not wear *suta* (Hindi = sacred thread). The "*janeo dhari* Santal [those who wear the sacred thread] are reluctant to intermarry or have social intercourse with the non-*janeo dhari* Santal."[16] This sect also adjured meat-eating. A prime motivation for the sect's adoption of such practices must have been to attain higher rank.

Both schisms and solidarity in the period shortly after the rebellion are described by Dalton:

> Santals who are under the example and precept of Bengali Hindus have abjured some practices considered impure by the latter and are called Sat Santal, that is, pure Santal; but there is a national antagonism between them [the Santal] and the Hindus that prevents any close fraternization or communion between the races. They are not over particular about food, but nothing will induce them to eat rice cooked by a Hindu, even a Brahman. Unfortunately, during the famine of 1866 this was not known to us. The cooks who prepared the food distributed at the relief center were all Brahmans and it was supposed that this would suit all classes, but the Santals kept aloof and died rather than eat from the hands so hateful to them.[17]

Dalton has somewhat overdrawn the reluctance of the Santal to fraternize with Hindus, but the event he describes and the tenor of his remarks regarding the hatred and fear that the Santal have of Hindu conform with all other reports.

The simultaneous attraction and resistance to the Hindu world appears in the remarks of a sophisticated northern Santal

[16] Majumder 1956:62.
[17] Dalton 1872:214

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

• 648 186 who in 1871 spoke in words almost identical to those one often hears today among the Santal; he says, "We only watch at Hindu festivals [we should only watch]; but as these festivals do not belong to us, Santal do not act rightly [in] offering to the *boṅga* (deities) of other races. On account of this our *boṅgas* are angry with us; it becomes like the state of having a wife and a co-wife, we are not making anybody satisfied."[18]

177 796 Regarding specific borrowings from the Hindus, this same Santal says, "From the *Dekos* we have from time to time taken over many festivals; but among these there is only one festival that the whole village celebrates, viz., the Karam." He explains that on this occasion the offerings include certain flowers, sun-dried paddy, a type of grass, oil, and vermilion, i.e., the offerings are typically Hindu. They are presented to the Hindu deities Karmu and Dharmu.

> At other festivals taken from the *Dekos*, only the man who celebrates it, worships, and we go to look at it; we do not worship. At the Durga festival such people offer to Durga, at the Kali festival they offer to Kali, at the Monsa festival they offer to Monsa, at the Chata festival they offer to the Chata boṅga, at the Pāta festival they offer to Mahadeb and at the Jatra festival they offer to Ransig, the Jatra boṅga.[19]

Though the Karam festival was certainly taken from the Hindus, it is not the only Hindu ceremony which the Santal communally celebrate. Various other ceremonies practiced in the nineteenth century and today are similar to Hindu cere-

[18] Bodding, 1942:158.
[19] Bodding *ibid.*:158.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 796 monies celebrated at approximately the same time, e.g., Sakrat (Hindi: Sankranti), and Dāsẽ (Hindi: Dasserah). However, these ceremonies are celebrated with a number of distinctive Santal practices, including animal sacrifice, worship at the Sacred Grove of Santal deities, etc.

177 178 • 648 The pattern of Santal-Hindu relations is thus one of Hindu domination and exploitation combined with considerable cultural influence. In the nineteenth century the Santal responded to increased Hindu pressure with a number of revolts which ended in defeat. These defeats must have indicated to the Santal that their position could not be improved by armed force nor by any other political means. Following these defeats acculturation and assimilation increased. At the same time there were attempts to curtail emulation of Hinduism and to combat assimilation, indicating the existence of counter-forces favoring solidarity. The advent of the market, population pressure, and increasing wealth differences among the Santal which developed during the latter part of the nineteenth century significantly affected the processes of acculturation and assimilation.

The Advent of the Market

177 361 648 311 The spread of the market, British Indian law and British protection led to a greater influx of Hindus into the hitherto sparsely populated Chotanagpur plateau. This Hindu influx plus the general growth of population, both Hindu and tribal, rapidly reduced the amount of unexploited land. The Santal record is full of examples of hiving off and forming new villages, new local lineages, and, no doubt, new sub-clans. The *bustee* of Daredih itself, which is now filled with industrial

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

workers, was founded as an ordinary agricultural village not more than about sixty years ago. But such opportunities decreased throughout the nineteenth and this century. One inevitable result was to increase wealth differences and to make them more permanent.

A major consequence of increased wealth differences has been the strain placed on internal solidarity by "envy" (*hisạ*; Hindi: *hinska*) and even more by fear of "envy." What this term conveys is concealed malicious intent based upon desire for what another possesses. Though Santal society has long been plagued with accusations of witchcraft, the notion that its practice is almost invariably deliberate and that it arises from envy is of modern origin. Though it is recognized that men may be "envious," it is thought that females most often are guilty and that it is only they who practice witchcraft. Fertile grounds for envy, and attendant witchcraft, appeared when wealthy Santal began using their capital to hire other Santal; to loan money, paddy, and seed at interest, to buy forest land, and even in a few cases to invest in various small-scale enterprises. Relations arising from these investments are often strained and a source of resentment. Envy also arises from observation of what wealth procures in terms of traditional Santal pleasures and from its use in settling disputes.

Aside from the exacerbation of "envy," which increased wealth differences produced, the market imposed other, more general strains. It is difficult to square the basic reciprocity of relations in a kin society like that of the Santal with the impersonal and contractual relations of the market. Though the Santal struggle over land with as much ferocity as any peasants, they find it hard to insist on strictly market relations with other commodities, especially if pressed by kinsmen. A few Santal

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

Nonetheless, elite Santal were somewhat more Hinduized
177 than their poorer fellows. Some managed to attract a coterie
556 of high-caste but often impoverished Hindus. One hears of wealthy Santal who spent considerable sums on such associates during trips to and attendance at Hindu festivals. Some who
177 were village headmen or Parganaths (multi-village headmen)
556 established enduring relations with the Mahārājā or local
622 zemindar of their region. These Santal often were given respon-
• 648 sibility for tax collection, in return for which they kept a portion and received grants of land.

177 The Santal have long followed the practice of establishing
608 among themselves, and with other castes, permanent bonds of
648 a kinship type, which are given public recognition in a "flower" (*phul*; Santali and Hindi =flower) ceremony. In some instances an elite family managed to establish such a tie with a Brahman family while ordinary Santal contracted such relations only with other tribals or Hindus of very low caste. *This contrib-*
[192] *uted to differential emulation of Hindu practices.* Some of the
[583] traditional elite among the southern Santal abandoned beef-eating and cow sacrifice; some affected the dress of high-caste Hindus; a few demanded an end to "capture marriage" (*itut' bapla*) because they did not wish to have close relations with unwealthy families of low status. Though their success in getting the non-elite to follow their Hinduized practices was limited, a certain degree of culture difference was established, to the detriment of solidarity.

177 However, as the historical evidence indicates and as any contemporary observer could infer, contact with Hindu society has been long and/or intensive, and that portion of Santal culture shared by all Santal is so marked with Hindu traits that it
[759] would be a monumental task to indicate all of them. All Santal call on neighboring Hindus of low caste to deliver babies.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 796 771 in the name of the Hindu deities invoked. Although this activity has recently been somewhat curtailed for reasons soon to be discussed, it is still possible to observe Santal worshipping Jugganath at the Cart Festival (*Rath Jatra*) in Baripoda, the capital of Mayurbhanj. Many Santal, even in villages where there are few Hindus, may also be seen immersing the Hindu [184] Tusu goddess. In spite of these activities, in which most Santal have engaged, and even though all Santal ceremonies have some Hindu elements, almost all southern Santal have remained firmly attached to their own deities, and there have been no mass conversions.

127 771 The Indian government's figures on Hindu religious identification are largely an artifice of census methods, and since at least the 1920's, often of coercion as well. Culshaw, for example, commments that:

> The prevailing Indian identification of race with religion has caused some confusion in their [the Santals'] minds, but the fact that about 50 per cent of Santal were returned in 1931 as Hindus and most of the remainder as followers of tribal religion indicated the heightened political consciousness of the enumerators more than any real division within the tribe.[2]

659 • 648 771 Many Santal reported to me that they were pressured by local Hindu authorities to register themselves as Hindus. Others claimed that ignorance played a major role in the returns; the census-takers asked, "What is your religion?" (*Dhorom*; Oriya), and most Santal, it is said, did not understand this word. When it was explained they would reply "Santal religion," and the census-taker would then say, "That is your caste (*jāti*), not

[2] Culshaw 1949:15.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

your religion. Are you Hindu, Muslim, Christian, or what?" By this means the census-takers might obtain the desired result. However, it should be remembered that neither Culshaw, who is a Christian missionary, nor the presently very communally oriented Santal are disinterested observers.

There is no question that since the 1920's at least, Hindu organizations like Arya Samaj have actively campaigned to get tribals to declare themselves as Hindus. Such declarations were regarded as demonstrations of national unity and as refutations of the charge that India was so culturally and socially diverse as to be incapable of nationhood. In view of Hindu pressures and census irregularities, the returns reported may at the most indicate that Santals were finding it increasingly difficult to muster the solidarity to resist Hindu pressure for common religious identification. At the very least, the returns may simply reflect Hindu pressure generated by the Independence Movement.

In spite of the manifold pressures operating to weaken Santal solidarity, there are few cases of actual social absorption. Apparently, the endogenous forces contributing to solidarity have been sufficient to prevent this from happening. However, in view of the experience of other tribes and because of the increase in centrifugal pressures created by industrial employment, it appears that further social absorption was imminent. Certainly centrifugal pressures had increased, and if the political rank path had not suddenly reopened in the 1930's, it seems likely that the Santal would have become as Hinduized as their neighbors, the Bhumij.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

121
177 does not understand the words. Such practices could hardly
186 have been borrowed because of a peculiar "fit" of their content
554 with traditional Santal patterns. Certainly such practices are not
755 naturalistically more efficacious. It is rather a case of connecting status and efficacy which is expressed in the Santal reference to Hindus as "*big* and *knowing* people."

121 There is a third reason for the tendency to adopt practices
177 of the dominant society, one which follows almost inevitably
186 from the condition of being encysted. This is the "external
• 648 pressure" brought to bear by the dominant society on the encysted society to adopt its customs. The basis for the near inevitability of this pressure is nothing less than the solidarity needs of the dominant society. Surrounding dominant societies must demand allegiance to at least the official symbols of suzerainty; acceptance of a number of other customs is likely also to be demanded as the solidarity needs of the dominant society increase. There are likely also to be a number of customs of the encysted society which the superior society finds repugnant, a reaction which invariably creates some pressure for "reform" of the encysted society. The pressures exerted on the encysted society may include positive rewards for compliance or coercive acts by police or even by an army.

648 Perhaps the oldest and most continuous of such pressures
782 on the Santal has been governmental interference with Santal cow sacrifice and beef eating. Armed interference has been practiced everywhere and has not ceased under present democratic conditions. Cow sacrifice has continued, but in secret so as to avoid prosecution and interruption of the rites. However, some villages, fearing arrest and harassment, have abandoned such sacrifice, particularly where there are Hindus in the village who might report this activity to the authorities. There is no

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

• 648 782 question that this pressure is the result of repugnance as well as solidarity needs.

177 554 The tendency to borrow which follows rank concession undermines solidarity, for all borrowing, by reducing distinctiveness, weakens solidarity, and borrowing of traits which directly represent solidarity is especially debilitating. Emulative borrowing not only eradicates boundary markers but is destructive of the internal aspect of solidarity, since it is likely to be more intense among segments of the encysted society with superior status. This differential emulation arises largely because of the following conditions: (1) the elite tend to have more intimate contact with members of higher social units because they are often representatives of their society in inter-societal relations, (2) they may attract a coterie belonging to higher social units but personally limited in political and economic power; such a coterie derives political and economic advantage from the relationship and confers prestige on its benefactor, (3) no amount of emulation in the absence of the requisite political and/or economic power can achieve rank improvement; the recognition of this fact contributes to differential emulation since the wealthy and powerful are the only ones in a position to attain higher rank in exogenous relations through emulation. Such differential emulation and the type of external relations described here have been noted among the Santal as well as other tribes in the area.

The impact of differential emulation on internal solidarity is to reduce "likeness" and to provide a cultural basis for di- [184] visive status distinctions. The ubiquitousness of "envy" and connected witchcraft in Santal social relations, and the difficulty of relations between the educated Santal elite and the non-elite exemplify this effect. The cultural gap between the

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

XIII. ADDITIONAL ACCOUNT BY OLD JUGIA

Because of the harassing of the Dekos and the distress through lack of food after we had crossed the Ajee river, we were, as time passed, spread about towards the North and the East, on the hills in the North East right up to the Ganges river. At that time there was only forest, and here and there Bhûyas[1] and on the hill tops Mar Muṇḍas[2]. The Muṇḍas they also call Râurias. The Bhûyas and the Mar Muṇḍas were the landowners at that time. They allowed us to take up land in peace, and they took a very small amount of rent from us. Under them we had no distress at all. But as time passed, the Dekos entered trading, and finally they settled down as money-lenders. They also became the money-lenders of the landlords. The landlords borrowed money and clothes from them and gave the country to them as security. In this way the Deko money-lenders got the country from them by fraud, they themselves became the landlords, and the real landlords became paupers and became like us. The Deko landlords living at the foot of the hill country also took possession of what belonged to the Mar.

We cleared the hill country and the forest country at our expense for the new landlords, after they had become money-lenders, and they gradually increased the land-rent for us. The money-lenders give us very small amounts, and they take very much. The crops of the year they take away from us, all of it, and we get through life by again incurring debts with them. However much we pay back, still it is not cleared off. If they are not satisfied with the crops of the year, they drive our cattle away; and if they are not content even by this, they make us, wife and children, serve with them as slaves for a couple of half-seers (of rice). At that time there were no magistrates; to whom could we complain? Afterwards Deko police came in; but these dismiss our cases, taking the white pice of their own race. We had very great distress. With the whole country we became bewildered.

Then different rumours arose. First this: The two Lag Lagin[3] snakes are coming; they will swallow people. To remove the adverse influence men of five villages gathered and walked about to five other villages, during one night, being religiously very abstinent. To our village those of five villages came, one man to every separate house. In the village

[1] A semi-hindoized caste, living here and there near the Santals. [2] A Dravidian tribe living on the hills in the northern parts of the Santal Parganas. [3] Lag Lagin, a Bengalised form of Nag Nagin, a pair of fabulous snakes.

[776]

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

173 668

up. And the people brought with them one leaf each to receive their portion. They counted these leaves; they saw how many thousands country people had come together. The Subá paid all the expenses. When we were about to disperse, the Subá said to us: We shall hunt over the Ṭir mountain, that is near to Deoghar; assemble there. But for some reason or other they did not hunt there.

After this it was rumoured, viz.: Some people, who knows who, are coming to kill the Dekos. As for you, at the end of the village street hang up the hide of a bullock and a pair of flutes, that they may know that you are Santals; otherwise they will kill you with the others. Fearing this we hung these things up in every village.

Then it was heard, viz.: In Bhognadi in the Pur country[9] a Subá Ṭhakur has appeared. Hearing this the people of the country commenced to go, each taking with them one half-seer of sun-dried rice and the milk of one cow. There they saw that they had built an altar, and that they had put up a fence round it. In the middle Ṭhakur was sitting in the shape of Sido of that village. Throwing themselves down on their face before him the people of the country worshipped him, and they brought rice and milk together in his name at the same place. Then a police head-constable from the courts came. He said to them: What order have you? out with it, I wish to see your authority. Then Sido said: Look here is my authority, and with a clasp-knife he killed him. Then the insurrection commenced. When they heard that they had killed the head-constable, the soldiers came. At the Kôcpara market place they fought against Sido and his brother Canhu and the country people. The soldiers were vanquished; therefore the courage of Sido and Kanhu and their party greatly increased. Then Sido and Kanhu gave an order: The landlords and usurers we shall kill every one of them, and the other Dekos we shall drive away to the other side of the Ganges; the reign will be ours. Then the people of the country became raving mad; many Subá Ṭhakurs appeared.

173 668 648

Now there happened fighting at Pakaur and Mohespur; here also the soldiers were vanquished. After this Maṇi Pargana from Jamolpani and Ram Maṅjhi from Baromasia in Nankar became Subá. With a host of the country people these two plundered Naranpur and Moluti. Binud Maṅjhi from Tilabani in Belparia became a Subá, and with a host of country people he plundered Deocha and Gunpura. At Gunpura the Santals were vanquished. Thereupon they had a fight at the Nangolia police station. There a great number of Santals were killed. From there they fought at Lanbaria on the other side of the Mor river. Here a great many soldiers fell, and a European also was killed. And Santals were shot dead in heaps. The Santals could not prevail; the Santals ran away into the Saptola forest and the Satbehor hill. Here they remained for about two months, in the months of Asin and Kartik (from the middle of September to the middle of November). Here the

[131]

[9] Most of the places mentioned by Jugia may be found on the large maps of the Santal Parganas. The Pur country is in the north-eastern part of this district.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

173
668 192

• 648 Santals plundered each other, because of the distress through lack of food. Thereupon the Europeans surrounded us; they drove us out, and to the villages Sikarpur and Ramkhuri.

Us men they caught and took every one of us to Dhasnia, the village of the landlord, that is to say, so many as they caught. Having kept us here for something like one month they brought us to Kumrabad near the Mor river. At that time the Europeans cozened us, they said to us: Why will you suffer? Tell who the Subę are; then we shall set you free now this moment. Then the country people told who they were. The Europeans caught the Subę; some of them they hanged there, and some they transported to an island[7]. A few they also set free. Sido had in the meantime died in the fighting, and Kanhu and his followers they caught afterwards. They hanged Kanhu and a couple others, and some, who knows how many, they transported to an island. Ram Mañjhi and Binud escaped. The Lieutenant Governor came and pacified us the people of the country; we returned to our respective villages.

During the insurrection we suffered severely. From Asar (middle of June to middle of July) for fully three months we lived in the hills at the foot of trees; rain was continually pouring down on us, and we were nearly dying from hunger, because of the guiles of the Subę Thakurs. During the insurrection many of us lost our cattle; therefore when we returned to our villages, we suffered much distress. There were no plough-cattle, there was nothing to eat, and the Dekos mocked us very irritatingly. We had again to fall into the hands of the same money-lenders. Some people unrighteously became rich during the insurrection by unlawfully taking possession of other people's cows and buffaloes.

648 692 From after the insurrection the Europeans have appeared in the Santal country. First Telbor Saheb was our magistrate. At that time he judged our cases without charging money; but nowadays much money has to be paid in court-cases: the writers take a couple of rupees, the muktiar (pleader-babus) take earnest-money in advance, stamps have to be put on, and if the orderlies are not given a little, they push you straight away when you come, and if you do not go and have trouble three-four times, the case is not settled. This we feel a distress; otherwise the Europeans judge well.

[7] I. e. the Andamans.

St Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 : (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

173 At this time, say the old Patriarchs, Ram Chandra, the mythical king of the Hindus, as we read in the Ramayana, was reigning. We hear that 173 some Kharwars[1] accompanied Ram Chandra's ex- 648 pedition to Lanka, to help him in his fight against the demon king, Ravana ; and so, the Santals had peace with the Dekos (*non Santals*) for a long time. [192] The Santals inhabited the jungles, while the Dekos (*non-Santals*) used to live in the plains. But in later times there was frequent friction between them.

Even now, the Dekos are considered as thorns by the Santals. They say that when the Santals reclaim a forest, Dekos come to snatch it away. They regret that the English helped the Dekos during the Mutiny (*the Santal Insurrection*); otherwise the boundary of Santal lands would have been the Ganges.

173 The Santals assert that in days long gone by, 539 their positions extended on both sides of the Ganges. There is a song about it : —

Gaṅ nàni dò pèrèc'ena,
Soṛa nàni dò coṛañena :
Do ja ñiru, ruàṛme.

1. The forefathers of the Santals, as we shall learn later, called themselves "Kharwars." (Cf Kherwal, Mayurbhanj).

3a Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

539
173

Others sing :—

Lo, lo my elder sister,
The river Ganges rises,
Lo, lo my elder sister,
The Sora river's full of water.

Semi-chorus : —

O my elder sister,
Let us have a net.
O my elder sister,
Let us catch fish.

Semi-chorus : —

O my elder sister,
Lobsters shall we catch.
O my elder sister,
Let us gather *balemàngori* fish.

173
• 648 While in Campa, it is said the Dekos (non-Santals) defeated the Santals and took possession of Campa Gar. But in the second battle, they were worsted and the Santals got back their fortress.

The Santals have a song in conversation between the two Deko brothers who led the battle and their sister, as regards the loss sustained by them. We hear that the names of the Deko brothers who fought were Indan Siñ and Mandan Siñ.

B. Mukherjea O. Y-1, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

The sister sings: -

539
648
173

Dadarè Indan Siñ Mandan Siñ,
Dadarè chuṭalòñ Campa ka gaṛ.
Bàhinge na kando, na khijò,
Bàhinge hate ka sàṅka bicòñ ;
Bàhinge kane ka sona bicòñ,
Bahinge tao hona lèbò Campa ka gaṛ.

The above is roughly rendered as following:—
O brothers, Indan Siñ and Mandan Siñ,
O brothers, we lost Campa gaṛ.

The brothers said in reply :—
O do not cry, do not cry, O our sister dear,
Campa gaṛ shall we conquer back,
By selling your bracelets and ornaments of ear.

539
669
614
173

The Santal sojourn at Campa is also noted for a serious civil war between the Kisku and the Màrṇḍi clans. There is also a song describing the fight:—

Beret', beret', beret'mè sè, gateñ ho,
Cirgàl, cirgàl, cirgàlmè sè, gateñ ho,
Kòeṇḍako mapak' gòpòc' kan.

Beret', beret', beret'mè sè gateñ ho,
Cirgàl, cirgàl, cirgàlmè sè, gateñ ho,
Badoliko nèmpènt' gòpòc' kan.

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

a grassy field called Bàṛi badwak' [Dr. Campbell says that it means a common grass. (*Panicum Colonum*, Ln.). The seeds are eaten during scarcity of food]. Then they crossed a forest and found themselves on the plains of Jona Jòspur. From this place they came over to Khàspal Belaoñja.

Here, they scattered themselves in many directions as they chose. Some went to Sir, some to Sikhàr, while others to Nagpur. Thenceforward, the Santals were, to a greater extent, under Deko (non-Santal) influence. They could preserve their independence only by contracting matrimonial alliances with the Hindus. They are no longer called Kharwars. Here an explanation as to why they are called Santals, is forthcoming; for there are some who say that as they lived for some time in the country of Sànt,[1] beyond Sikhàr, they are called Sanotar[2] (*Santal*).

1. Sant = The Santals of Mayurbhanj according to the Census report of 1931, were called Kherwals or Kherwars (Santals Puritan) before they settled in the country round about a place called Saont in Midnapur. P. 151. Risley (*People of India*, App. VIII) says that Santals ruled here for 200 years.

2. From Saont, Risley adds, "Again pressed by the Hindus, they wandered on under a Raja called Hambir Singh to the eastern part of the Manbhum district near Pachet. Here after a while their Rajas adopted the Hindu religion and set up as Rajputs, so that at the present day they intermarry with the family of the Raja of Surguja.

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Here the Santals became the tenants of the king of Sikhàr but we hear that the Dekos seized their lands and property and drove them away. It is at Sikhàr that the Santals learnt how to observe the *Chatapòròb*[1] (one of Santal festivals). From Sikhàr some of the Santals came to Ṭuṇḍi near Dhanbad.

The Santals regard stability as the biggest of their tribal problems. Their forefathers exhorted upon them not to cross the river Ajoy, but they had to go against their wishes for the sake of bread. And in course of time they have found themselves in the Santal Parganas. With a characteristic naivetè, the Santals say that like the caterpillars

But the people would not change their religion, so they left their chief to rule over the Hindùs, and wandered on to the Santal Parganas where they are settled now."

People of India, App. VIII, pages clviii-clix. Risley has some reflections on the origin of the name "Santal." He says that according to Mr. Skrefsrud it is a corruption from "Saontar" and was adopted by them after their sojourn for several generations in the country about Saont in Midnapur. Before they went to Saont they were said to have been called Kharwar, the root of which, *khar* is a variant of *hòṛ*, 'man', the name which all Santals use among themselves. Col. Dalton expressed a doubt whether the name of the place may not have been taken from the tribe, "a doubt strengthened by the discovery of a small tribe of Saonts in Surguja and Keonjhar." Risley does not think the point of importance as the Santal always now calls himself "mañjhi."

1. Chata-pòròb = Observed in Mayurbhanj on the 12th day (Dwadasi) before the Bhadra Purnima (full-moon in the month of Bhadra, Aug-Sept).

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Similarly, Khàiri gar of Santal tradition may perhaps be identified with Kheri-garh or the fort on the hill at Kheri, ten miles to the south-west of Bhagalpur.[1]

Secondly, the Mundà traditions corroborate the story of a struggle with the Kharwars, in tune with the Santal myth on the point. The reason for the attack was the refusal by the Mundàs (or by the Santals according to Santal tradition) to bestow the hand of one of their girls on the son of Madho Singh Kharwar. The tradition of the Kharwars also affords corroboration to this tradition of the Mundàs and Santals.[2] According to Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy, this fight took place while the Mundàs and Santals were at Rothasgarh "without doubt the Ruidasgarh of Mundà tradition." Next, he suggests, one branch of the Mundà tribes such as the Korwas, the Asurs, the Birijas, and the Kisanrs, appear to have followed the course of the Koel river till they reached the present districts of Palamau and Ranchi, while the Mundàs and the Santals crossed the Sone and marched on in a south-easterly direction along the border-land that separates the present Hazaribagh district from Palamau and Ranchi (Nagpur of Santal and Mundà tradition).

1. Ref. *The Mundàs and their country*, Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy, p. 100.
2. Ref. Do Do p. 110

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

173 Now the Santals and Mundàs parted company.
167 The Santals left Nagpur (Chotanagpur), crossed the
• 648 Damodar and settled down in Sikharbhum (the modern district of Hazaribagh) and later on, followed the course of the Damodar and passed on to Manbhum[1] and to the Santal Parganas, while the Mundàs preferred to remain in the forest-covered regions of what is now the Ranchi district.[2]

175 167 *Historical Basis of Santal Migration in the Santal Parganas*[3]

The history of Santal migrations does not however remain conjectural in the 18th Century, as we have authentic records to go upon. These will show that whatever their original habitat might have been, they were settled in the Chotanagpur plateau and in the adjoining districts of Midnapore and Singhbhum, and that they began to move to the north towards the close of the 18th Century.

[101] In 1795, we find them described as "Soontars" living in Ramgur (Ramgarh), a "rude and unlettered

1. The Santals of Mayurbhanj when questioned by us as to whether they were autocthonus in the place replied that they came from Sili Sikhar, some from Manbhum, while others from Dhalbhum. They asserted that Mayurbhanj was not their original seat.

2. Ref. *The Mundàs and their country*, S. C. Roy, page 111.

[113] 3. With acknowledgements to the *Dt. Gazetteer*, Santal Parganas, Vol.XXII. pp. 95-99.

Bi Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

871 1924-25 to 8,473 in 1938-39; i.e. on an average
162 it doubled in course of 15 years.

871 Although in all areas the progress was not the
162 same (in the Santal Parganas during this period the
184 number of pupils under instruction rose very slightly viz. 1428), there was an awareness of the position as evidenced by the fact that the Santal Parganas Enquiry Committee reviewing the position *vis-a-vis* Santal education began their work with the proposition, "The first essential of the aboriginal is more education" and lamented that there was not a single school for the 60,000 Paharias in the Damin Hills.

871 The British government did not neglect abori-
648 ginal education but they had no visible plan of
797 their own. This task was urgently taken up by
177 the missionaries, who along with their hospitals and social service units, ran aboriginal schools of their own. As a result of their social and spiritual programme, a very large number of these tribals were converted to Christianity which meant a change lock, stock and barrel, of aboriginal sets of values. Their souls were sought to be saved. But out emerged a type of English educated people who
[539] like our young Michael Madhusudan Dutta might have exclaimed in rapture:

> Long sunk in superstition's night
> By Sin and Satan driven,

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

I saw not—cared not for the light,
That leads the blind to heaven.

Such a disillusionment perhaps lay in the subconscious mind of an educated Santal lad of Mayurbhanj, who asked us pathetically, "Please tell me if we have any religion."

This should be studied in the background of deeper moorings in the heart of the Santals as a result of centuries of culture-contact with the rest of the population, mostly Hindus. We have already seen that these tribals have mostly lived not in watertight compartments, but cheek by jowl with the rest of the more civilised people of India. So slowly and imperceptibly, acculturation has been going on.

One carefully traversing through the Santal myths and tradition comes to the inevitable conclusion that for ages and ages they have tried to form a part of the Hindu society. Use of vermilion during marriage, wearing of *alta* marks on the feet of women, characterising the Supreme deity as Thakur Jiu, obeservance of festivals like Charak (Pata—the hook-swinging festival), the strange resemblance of some Santal dances with the *Rasa* dance as described in the Vishnu Purana, the singing of essentially Vaishnava songs during the *Sohrae*, the shouting of *Haribol* during marriage, funeral and other ceremonies, the worship of Durga in Mohul-

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

668 common platform. They long for the development of their distinctive culture—a pre-Dravidian Jharkhand.

177 Now with Independence, and its concomitant
• 648 adult franchise, things are undergoing a rapid trans-
[641] formation. The Santal, along with the other aboriginals, like his more civilised brethren has got to handle a ballot paper. They see that the more advanced Indians are trying to have a better standard of life and are rushing in for more and more of education, for amenities of life hitherto denied to the hill and jungle-folk. Development plans of the government, Community projects, programmes of tribal uplift are gradually throwing open to them roads, motor lorries, schools and fineries. Planes buzz over them, radios blare and torch lights flash. With all the glare of modernism in their eyes, is it a wonder that these aboriginals, so long living idyllic lives in the backwoods of songs and dances are puzzled at the threshold of a New World?

177 So long the seeds of a new order were in the air. Old sets of value now seemed disturbed. In
[184] Bolpur area, one could notice new house-types with
[342] windows and furniture, they lacked in the past.
[352] Santals were found chewing betels, drinking less and
[27] taking to milk and tea and cigarettes. Many have
[262] given up beef like the Hindus, even buffalo meat and pork have gone off their menu. The old Santal

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

[P.1]

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Santal Parganas is a district within Bhagalpur Division in Bihar, lying between 23° 40′ and 25° 18′ North latitude and between 86° 28′ and 87° 57′ East longitude. It is bounded on the north by the districts of Bhagalpur and Purnea, on the east by Malda, Murshidabad and Birbhum ; on the south by Burdwan and Manbhum ; and on the west by Hazaribagh, Monghyr and Bhagalpur. The principal range in the district is that of the Rajmahal Hills. They consist of a succession of hills, plateaus, valleys and ravines, the general elevation of which varies from 500 to 800 feet above sea level. A large portion of the range is included in the Daminikoh (the skirt of the hills). In the Santal parganas within the four subdivisions Dumka, Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal, the Santals live in largest numbers. They live in Damin areas, where previously one could not enter without the permission of the Commissioner. The Santal living on the very tract of the Aryan overflooding Northern India (in fact very near the sacred triangular spot between Benares, Rajgir and Gaya which witnessed the phenomenal Upanishadic speculation of the days of Janak and the rise of Jainism and Buddhism) could not but have been influenced by these and in their turn must have considerably left their mark on the folk culture of Northern India. If there is any culture which still carries the impress of the underlying philosophic speculation and order of thought that was wide spread in India prior to the rise of the Dravidian culture, it was very likely the belief and

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

retired to the Rajmahal Hills. In 1851 Captain Sherwill found 83,265 Santals in Daminikoh alone. 175 167 174 [162]

Santal Rebellion (Hul) of 1855. Mr. Buchanan Hamilton has mentioned in his unpublished manuscipt that "the Santals has settled in the Dumka sub-division by 1809 having come last from Birbhum in consequence of the annoyance which they have received from its Zamindars". In 1818 Mr. Sutherland found them engaged in clearing the jungles under the hills in Godda sub-division. Mr. Dunbar, Collector of Bhagalpur, mentioned that by 1836 about 427 villages had been established by the Santals in the Damin area.

These Santals of the Daminikoh in the year 1855 became rebellious. The chief cause of this rebellion was the oppression of the Mahajans, the Darogas and the corruption of the Amlas. These Mahajans gave the Santals money as a loan with high interest and one he had contracted a debt he had little chance of escape, because if his creditor sued him, the Santals could not produce any authentic record, whereas the creditor had his ledgers and day book. These Mahajans sometimes without going to court to realise his capital and interest, sent his agents to take away their cattle forcibly. The Santals bore this oppression thinking that it was useless for them to obtain redress against the wealthy Mahajans, besides that had not enough money to pay the Amlas and Pleaders in the Court. If they approached the Court and loged a complaint against these Mahajans, they only got an order on the police to enquire and report, but the police generally sided with the Mahajans and submitted reports in their favour. [1] Erratum: i.e., "once". 2 Erratum: i.e., Mahajans. -- Analyst] 175 648 669 426 [692] [625]

175 The Santals of the Damin complained that they
• 648 got different treatment than their neighbours the Suria ^1
669 Paharias and the Mal Paharias, and that the Santals who
426 were living outside the Damin areas, were better off. Inside Damin the Zamindars ousted their Santal tenants from the lands they had cleared, although these lands had been settled with them by the Zamindars on long leases at low rates, on condition that they would clear the jungles. But as cultivation extended, the non-Santals forced the Santals to till some of their lands and thus they gradually extended their holdings, and ultimately appropriated the best portion of the lands in the village by exacting mortgages in return of loans. Thus the Santals moved to other parts where they settled by clearing fresh jungles and establishing new villages. Again they were forced to leave the
[692] villages. When the Santals lodged complaints against the Mahajans in the court, no steps were taken by the executive (naibs, darogas etc.) as they were ready instruments in the hands of the Mahajans. The Santals who took loans from the Mahajan, could not pay in cash but worked out their debt by personal services, thus they became slaves in the hands of the creditor. The sons and daughters or his other nearest relations were also liable for this sort of service.

175 Due to all these oppressions the Santals were very
648 much annoyed, and as a result of this in 1854 they
669 attacked the houses of some Mahajans at night. The authorities caught them and treated them as dacoits. They were tried and convicted although they protested against it. After a year, again the same thing was repeated but this time the Government released them as it appeared that the crime was due to the oppression

1 [Erratum: this should read "Sauria". Cf. errata
^ sheet, category 116, p. x -- Analyst]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

175
648
669

of the Mahajans. Then in the month of July 1855 a revolt broke out among the Santals, under the leadership of four brothers, Sidu, Khanu, Chandu and Bhairal[1] of the village of Bhagnadihi situated South of Burhait.

Sidu and Khanu proclaimed themselves lords of the place under the title of Subahs and appointed other subordinate officers. Having in this way raised a general expectation of some great event among their countrymen the leaders hoped that the Government would enquire into the matter and redress their wrongs. When that was not done they demanded that the Government should redress their wrongs, failing which they would be compelled to take the law into their own hands to put an end to the persecution. Getting no response from the Government, a general order went through the encampment to move down towards Calcutta. Accordingly on the 30th June 1855 at full moon, several thousand Santals set out. As long as the food which they had brought from their villages lasted, the march was orderly but with the end of their own stock of provisions, the necessity for plundering arose. On the seventh of July of the same year, having heard of the gathering with two brothers at their head, a police officer accompanied with some sepoys went hurriedly to arrest them. After some discussion the police officer ordered his men to arrest them. Hearing the order of the Inspector the Santals were so enraged that they jumped upon him and bound him. Sidu their leader killed the Inspector with his own hand and the police left nine of their party dead in the Santal camp. This tactless procedure of the Inspector changed the whole trend of the Santal unrest and it took the form of rebellion, for at first they did not seem to have contemplated

1 [Erratum: this should read "Bhairab". Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

175
• 648
669 armed opposition to the Government. Their main object was to march down to Calcutta in order to place the petition of their grievances before the Governor-General. In July 1857 real rebellion started and several villages were burnt and looted. They attacked the house of Raja of Ambar at Kadamsair, near Pakur, and destroyed the Indigo factory and some railway works there. The Santal mob killed many English men including two English ladies.

The local authorities first took it as robbery, but at the end of July 1857 the Government finding it difficult to control the mob asked for more military help. Detachment after detachment poured in, native landlords supplied help to the troops on their march, and a special commissioner was appointed with extraordinary powers for the suppression of the rebellion.

All the troops were placed under the command of a Brigadier General but he had not got full and independent authority. An order was issued to him on the thirtieth of July stating that the military should not act independently of the civil power, but that the military operations should be entirely in the hands of the military commanders. The troops contacted the rebels at Mahespur and defeated them and their leaders, the four brothers, were wounded and several hundred Santals were killed. On the 24th July the troops took possession of Burhait, and Sidu the rebel ringleader was handed over to the troops by his own followers. Due to this military action quiet had been restored to some parts, but still there were a large number of Santals up in arms who took refuge in the jungle. After this an order was issued by the Government that those who would come in and submit within a week

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

would be pardoned with the exception of the leaders and those who had committed murder. The Santals took this offer as a confession of weakness and in the month of September again renewed their activity. By the end of the month of September the area from Deoghar to the South Western border of the district came in the hands of the Santals. The Santals showed great bravery and reckless courage in the struggle against the military. As long as their national drums continued to beat, the whole party would stand and allow themselves to be shot down. 175 648 669 175 648 669 181

The Santals showed great bravery in this struggle and they did not understand yielding. Once forty Santals refused to surrender and took shelter inside a mud house. The troops surrounded the mud house and fired at them but the Santals answered with their arrows. Then the sepoys made a big hole through the wall, and the Captain ordered them to surrender but they again shot a volley of arrows through the half opened door. The sepoys started firing through the hole and the Captain again asked them to surrender but they continued shooting arrows. Some of the Sepoys were wounded. At last when the discharge of arrows from the door slackened, the Captain went inside the room with a Sepoy. He found only one old man greviously wounded, standing erect among the dead bodies. The Sepoy who accompanied the Captain asked him to throw away the arms but instead he rushed upon him and killed him with his battle axe. The Government was then compelled to proclaim Martial Law. As soon as the order for martial law went forth, the things assumed a very different appearance. The Santal rebels had to surrender and peace prevailed. 175 648 669

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

178
175
648
669
634
625
622
426
804
566
466
464

The Governor understanding the mistake of his predecessors tried to appease the Santal by removing the genuine grievances. He made the Santal territory a separate district called Daminikoh, with four sub-districts, Dumka, Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal. The charge of these sub-districts were given to a Deputy Commissioner and four assistant Commissioners. The regular police was abolished and the duty of keeping peace and order and of arresting of criminals was vested in the hands of the parganait and the village headman.

In the social sphere also steps were taken to ameliorate the condition of the oppressed Santals. The money lenders were not permitted to extort their debts over and over again by recourse to trickery or otherwise. False weights and measures were corrected and cheating in this department was punished and the Santals could now sell their produce in the market witout fear of being swindled. The abolition of serfdom and the new relationship between capital and labour were far reaching reforms, and the Santal could earn his living as a free worker on the Railway instead of being a slave of a powerful protector. Again, the beginning of tea plantations about this time gave a fresh impetus to profitable work and a higher economic level was achieved by the Santal, who further decided to migrate to the tea area, and on the expiry of the contract to return with a tidy some of money. Such a diverting of labour caused an easing in the struggle for existence among those who stayed at home and enabled the migrant to earn enough to establish himself securely for life.

Thus out of the rebellion came some lasting good and the Santals in the end benefited from it.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

CHAPTER VII

Culture Contact

In the concluding chapter I would like to assess the effect of the impact of alien cultures on the life and customs of the Santals of Santal Parganas.

The Santals according to O'Malley[1] came from Hirbhum and first settled in the Santal Parganas between 1790 and 1810. Outside Santal Parganas the Santals had contact with the Hindus but this contact was not very pleasant. They were oppressed by the Zamindars and Mahajans to such an extent that even now they call such non-Santals as "Diku" (those who trouble them). In the Santal Parganas also they were oppressed by the Zamindars and Mahajans, and when this oppression was unbearable in 1855 they became rebellious. After the rebellion the Government declared it as a restricted area. No body without the permission could enter the area. From this it appears that the contact of the Santals with the Hindus in the Santal Parganas in the beginning was not cordial. Naturally the Santals at that time could not have borrowed much culturally from the Hindus. They rather tried to stick to their old customs which would preserve their entity and maintain unity in their rank.

Alien Religious Movements and their effect on the Santal religion: From the earliest records it appears that not much Hindu influence operated in the Santal Parganas to convert them, except for the Kharwar

1. Bengal District Gazetteers (Santal Parganas).

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

Sorup and Haru Mąñjhi were two brothers. Sorup Mąñjhi left Bogri because of the elephants, came to Raipur and settled. He had established himself well at the end of a year or two, so he told his younger brother: 'Leave Bogri, where the elephants are on the increase. Some day you will be trampled on and killed. Come with me.' Haru Mąñjhi thought to himself: 'True enough, many men have been killed; perchance they will kill me.' Thinking thus, he took all his children, left Bogri and came to Raipur. From Rautora in Raipur they established a village in Barikul, Sorup Mąñjhi saying to his brother: 'Go to, brother, put up your huts and stay at Barikul.' Then Haru Mąñjhi went out with his children, his cattle and his goats, and built his huts there. He had four boys and two girls; the girls they brought with them from Bogri, and the four boys were born in Barikul. He obtained sons-in-law for his daughters to live with them, and one or two tenants came together. In this way the village increased to many houses." Wild elephants, of which there are not so many now as formerly, do still on occasion cause great damage to ripening crops. Barikul was founded five generations ago, a period of about one hundred years. At that time there was also a possibility that by moving his abode the Santal could regain a measure of independence. The Santals have been spoken of as formerly "nomadic".[1] It may be that in the strict sense of the word they were in some remote period nomads. For any period of which we have record, however, they have been agriculturalists, though food-gathering and hunting provide them with important subsidiary occupations. Their migrations have been due to pressure of one kind and another. They prefer to move to forest lands where they will have a hard struggle to establish new settlements than to remain where they have to defend their holdings and their livelihood against hostile forces, whether these be wild animals, malignant actions directed against individuals or the community from the unseen world, or the oppression of landlords and moneylenders.

The last cause operated to produce a great northward movement in the early decades of the nineteenth century, and finally goaded them into rebellion. The Santal rebellion has been frequently described.[2] It took place in an area remote from the Bankura district, but it has to be mentioned because it created

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Bengal District Gazetteers: Santal Parganas*, ed. L. S. S. O'Malley, Calcutta, 1910.

[2] J. H. Hutton, *Modern India and the West*, ed. L. S. S. O'Malley, Oxford, 1941. Chapter on the Primitive Tribes, pp. 417–44. Also bibliography.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

175 a great stir throughout the Santal country. The story has
• 648 become part and parcel of the consciousness of Santals every-
669 where, and the leaders are still celebrated in songs that are
[538] current far from the places in which they performed their
[533] exploits. The rebellion had no direct connection with the Sepoy mutiny. Both risings did, however, originate in the unsettled state of the country and the inexperience of the British authorities. The Santals rose against the intolerable rapacity of the moneylenders, with whom the subordinate officials of the government, and particularly the police, were in league. It became necessary to call out strong armed forces to restore law and order before the grievances could be redressed. The rebellion followed a pattern one might expect when ill-armed rioters faced armed and disciplined troops. The Santals gathered, sometimes numbered in thousands, and proceeded to plunder the nearby bazaar towns. In the first flush of indignation and excitement they sought out their enemies, murdering police officials and moneylenders, as also other hapless individuals who came in their way. The alarmed government dispatched strong military forces to the area and proclaimed martial law. The disturbances dragged on in sporadic fashion for over two years, at the end of which the constructive measures of the government began to take effect. A new district was set up with special regard to the need for protecting the land of the Santals, and their village system was used in the organization set up for maintaining order by giving a measure of responsibility to their tribal officials.

175 Since that date the history of the Santals has been peaceful
648 and some measure of progress has been achieved. It was not
[423] however, until the second decade of the twentieth century that the Bengal Government passed an Act—the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Act, 1918—which endeavoured to protect Santals and other aboriginals in Bengal in similar fashion. It prohibited the transfer of land from aboriginals without the permission of the courts and prevented the attachment of their lands for debts arising out of causes other than the non-payment of rent.

175 By that time most of the damage had been done, and con-
426 sequently the Santals are now overwhelmingly in the position
648 of under-tenants. The background of their economic life can be
423 seen in the following example, which is typical rather than peculiar. In 1896 the villagers of Ramboni borrowed the sum of forty rupees from their landlord in order to excavate an irrigation tank on their land. In the year 1913 they were sold

5: Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

of great prestige, it is true of nearly all the village headmen that their whole bearing reveals a sense of dignity, and the exercise of their responsibilities has developed a practical wisdom in dealing with men and affairs that is not to be despised. It is unfortunate that the trend of policy under the British Government (except in the Santal Parganas district) has done much to undermine the authority of the headman, firstly through the development of a highly organized and centralized system of justice. When the aggrieved party in a dispute between Santals is able to seek redress in the distant district courts he is under a strong temptation to ignore the findings of the informal village and tribal councils. The temptation is all the stronger when the Hindu law administered by the court differs from Santal customary law, as it does in some important particulars. Secondly, the organs of local self-government which have been fostered in Bengal take no account of the Santal village system. It is true that some effort is made to secure representation of Santal interests by a system of nomination, but local influence has passed largely into the hands of the landlords. The government is aware of some of the disabilities under which Santals live, and since the passing of the Government of India Act, 1935, "Special Officers" have been appointed in several districts. It is their duty to watch over the interests of the Santals, but the success of their work depends largely on their own initiative, a factor which varies from one individual to another. In a few cases where Santal headmen have maintained their position in relation to dealings with non-Santals and with government, it is because they have secured some education and have been able to compete on more equal terms with their neighbours.

None of the other village officials compare with the headman for prestige. There is often a deputy headman, the *paranik*, who works as an adviser, but his main reason for existence is to function for the headman when the latter may be ill or away on family affairs, and he does not occupy a prominent place at other times. Many villages at the present day omit to appoint one. Next in importance comes the *jogmaṇjhi*, who is still found in every village. It is difficult to define his functions in a phrase; he is a kind of "censor of morals". As such he is the guardian of the morals of the young men in the village, and his wife exercises oversight of the morals of the young women. Unlike many of the tribes to whom they are closely related, the Santals have no dormitory system for the young people of the village. They have no memory of ever having possessed

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

the tables may be turned on those who lord it over them. In Bodding's collection of the Folk-Tales[1] there are two stories which turn on the fact that the bodies of high-caste strangers house the souls of animals, while the bodies of men of low caste house human and beautiful souls. (The means by which the real person can be discerned is to look at him through the wing feather of a vulture.) In common with other tribes of their group and many primitive peoples in other parts of the world, the Santals refer to themselves as "men" (*hoŗ*). A Santal once said in reply to a direct question as to whether any other race was superior to his: "No, there are no others who are greater than us. You can see that from the fact that even today our womenfolk will not eat rice that has been cooked by Brahmins. Formerly, when our menfolk ate Hindu rice they were made to sleep outside for one night; they could not sleep with their wives. When they brought rice from outside to the house they were made to eat it in the courtyard and clean up the place where they had eaten, and then wash their own eating utensils." Many Santals work as day labourers in the fields of well-to-do caste Hindus and receive payment in grain or sometimes in cooked food. The cooks in the homes of their employers are Brahmins, and so by refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of the Brahmin they hold themselves aloof from the Hindu social structure. Nevertheless, the complete aloofness of former days has been modified and is maintained only by the women. As one might expect, Santals share with others abhorrence of social customs which do not agree with their own standards of morality, and they exaggerate the iniquities practised by other peoples. The same person said: "When the *Deko* put out their lamps at night they have no sense of what is right and wrong. They respect no one, whether their younger brother's wife, elder brother's wife, their own sister or anyone else. Moreover, they do not respect any of their relations by marriage."

Many of the *Deko* make a living out of the Santal, as the cat finds its sustenance in his home. The analogy is by no means perfect, and its chief value for the Santal is that it ministers to his self-respect. In the Bankura district many of the landlords of the Santals are Sundis, who are themselves classified as an Exterior or Scheduled caste. Their hereditary occupation is the distilling and selling of spirits, and they are usually the lessees of the government liquor and drug shops. They owe their present

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Folk-Tales*, Vol. III, Nos. 74 and 77.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

They owe their present position of affluence to Santal habits of insobriety. Secondly, much of the land has been acquired by trading castes from Bihar who followed the Santals when the country was being opened up. They brought with them such things as salt and cooking oil, which they exchanged for grain. Clothing was added at a later date, for until within living memory Santals largely wove their own clothes from cotton grown on the lands surrounding their homesteads. Like the Sundis, these traders provided credit facilities for their customers and so gained power over them. The monsoon fails on the average once in seven years in Western Bengal, and the traders import grain in times of scarcity. Formerly this was lent out at a recognized rate of interest amounting to 100 per cent. per annum. The only security which a Santal had to offer was a mortgage on his land, and, if the trader wished it, the almost inevitable result was an action in the courts, followed by an auction at which the creditor purchased the land. The third important class among the landlords are the Brahmins, descendants of the men who were brought into the country to act as priests and court officials to the local *rajas* or rulers. At the time when British rule was being established many of these *rajas* exercised control over tracts of country that were largely covered by forest and sparsely inhabited. They encouraged Santals and some other peoples to settle as cultivators, and they also rewarded the services of their Brahmin officials by grants of land. Brahmins are forbidden by caste rules to engage in cultivation, so they in their turn encouraged Santals to become their tenants.

The Santals have a proverb: "A *Deko* friend is like a thorn fence." In other words, if you stumble into it you are liable to suffer from scratches. They sometimes make fun of themselves and exaggerate the fear that they feel. Thus: "The elders used to run away and hide in the jungle whenever they saw an umbrella approaching the village." But in spite of the fun, the fear persists. A difficulty arose a few years ago in a village Santal church when the superintending missionary placed there as pastor a man who was a *Deko*. This resulted in a vigorous protest, and the leader of the villagers' delegation summed up their feelings in the following parable: "When a kite is wheeling overhead the chickens all take shelter under their mother's wings. After they have grown up they know that the kite can do them no harm, but nevertheless whenever a kite is overhead they quake inwardly and cannot get on with their pecking." In the company of non-Santals, a Santal is inclined to become tongue-

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

829 571 tied. Even men who enjoy a wide reputation in their own tribe become ineffectual when engaging in a discussion with *Deko*, a factor which nullifies many of the advantages that they might otherwise gain by their representation on local self-governing bodies. The difficulty is not simply one of language, for those who reach such positions are men of some education who have a command of Bengali; it is caused by the old fear of the chicken for the bird of prey. Santals themselves complain that their own representatives are not "cunning" enough.

• 648 829 With certain of the lower castes who are cultivators like themselves the Santals claim a special relationship. Chief among these are the Kurmi or Mahato, who are looked upon as distant kinsfolk. "Formerly", said an informant, "they used to look on us as their younger brothers. At their weddings we used to carry away their baskets of sweets, and in fact without our presence their weddings could not take place. They sacrifice pigs at the time of the *Sohrae*. Our ancestors used to tell the story of how during the rule of the Moslems the Kurmi were oppressed. They had great trouble to survive. It is said that one day when we Santals were celebrating a *Mak' Mõṛẽ* festival, a band of Moslems was driving a group of Mahato before them. They came right into the place where we were sacrificing, but even so they did not lose caste. In this way they are co-sharers with the Santals." Here, however, is some Santal lore that is not altogether to the credit of the Mahato: "All the Mahato women have to learn witchcraft. If any of them does not do so, she cannot get married. For this reason when a Mahato party is seeking a bride the first question which they ask is, 'Has she learnt witchcraft or not?'"

[539]

563 [829] There are other stories of related peoples, e.g. the Deswali, who are said to have resulted from the union of a local *raja* with a Santal girl, and there are a number of castes with whom they live in close contact. The most interesting of these is the Kamar caste, workers in iron. The Santals would appear to have been using iron implements both in agriculture and in hunting for a very long period, but they do not work in iron themselves. Until comparatively recently, iron smelting from ore gathered on the hillsides was common and the smelting was done by the Kamars. Modern industry has brought this to an end, but the sites of old furnaces can still be identified by the heaps of iron slag, which the Santals call "iron excrement". The Kamars, however, are still blacksmiths. Every moderate-sized village contains a family of Kamars who have been granted a piece of land from the

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

439 [437] women had no notion of the market price of their resin and were quite content to be paid in this way. The same man had been dealing with that village for many years, and he must have made tremendous profits. Furthermore, on this particular occasion my companion, who was himself a sharp-witted *Deku*, soon realized that the scales were heavily tipped in the trader's favour. On this being pointed out, the latter decamped before his customers were aware of the reason for his haste. One finds 427 also that it is, or has been until very recently, customary for the cultivator in Bengal to pay sums of money in excess of the legal rent to his landlord. The Santal is one of the worst sufferers from this practice, and he continues to pay more than he should for the sake of peace, even when he has been made aware of the fact.

• 648 668 Santals have not been caught up into the political activities of the last thirty years, for the Congress or nationalist movement is represented locally by those whom they regard as their worst enemies. They have shared some of the excitement engendered during periods of Mass Civil Disobedience, though their own contribution is liable to express itself in unorthodox forms. During the first such movement, in 1920–21, word spread that Gandhi rule had begun and it was Gandhi's order to [231] boycott everything white-coloured. In some places Santals slaughtered large numbers of their poultry in consequence, and in one or two instances even goats and sheep were slain. Their political education has advanced since, and the disillusion which followed their "sacrifice" ensured that there would be no repetition of such tactics. The next great Disobedience movement, in 1930, made more impression largely because on that occasion the Congress programme stressed the boycott of the licensed liquor shops. The Santals welcomed this aspect of the programme, not from any zeal for temperance, but because they soon came to see from experience that the government staff available for enforcing the excise laws was hopelessly inadequate to its task. The practice of illicit distilling, which [213] had previously been held in check by respect for the law, became widespread. Later the extension of the franchise under the Government of India Act of 1935 has shown them that their vote has power. Some of the more politically conscious, infected by the communal situation and influenced by the demand for a separate aboriginal province in Bihar, consider it a grievance that Santals are counted among the "Scheduled castes" on the electoral roll, and think they should be granted separate representation.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

separate representation. In the elections to the Bengal Provincial Legislative Assembly which took place in 1946 a Santal offered himself for election for the first time from the Bankura Rural Scheduled caste constituency. He was a member of one of the rare well-to-do Santal families and had received education up to the Intermediate Arts standard of the Calcutta University at the mission college in Bankura. He stood as an "Independent" and he was supported by the Moslem League organization, but he failed to be elected. His rival was a non-Santal member of the Scheduled castes who was a Congress candidate. No Santal has yet been elected to the Bengal Provincial Assembly.

The fact that the dominant Santal attitude to their neighbours is one of suspicion and latent hostility does not mean that this has always been the case. There are some indications pointing to a time when relations between Santals and Hindus were more friendly than they are today. The story already related about the Mahato is one. It may well have been that during the period of Moslem suzerainty the aboriginals made common cause with the Hindus. To go back much farther, P. O. Bodding[1] has suggested that in the story of the *Ramayana*, one of the great Hindu epics, there is a hint of an alliance between aboriginals and the hero of the epic, Ram, when he made war against the King of Lanka. The reference is to the assistance given by the "Hanuman log", or monkeys, who, it has been inferred, may well have been in fact human beings of the stock from which the ancestors of the present-day Santals were drawn. In Santal folklore there are stories which describe the marriage of human beings with monkeys, and there is little doubt that such stories symbolize the results of interracial marriages.

Living as they do in close contact with their neighbours, the Santals have borrowed heavily from the ideas and institutions around them, and in some cases they have doubtless contributed to the common stock. It is almost impossible to isolate certain features in their culture and say that these have been borrowed from non-Santal sources. That which is distinctive in Santal culture is the way in which they have used a common background to conserve their tribal life and to provide themselves with the rudiments of a philosophy. The retention of their language as a vigorous element of their own culture must have preserved much from the ancient days of their own life, and has to some extent cut them off from familiarity with the epics

[1] *District Gazetteers: Santal Parganas.*

5: Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

the food of the *Turuk*, rice or other food, the spirits will run away. If anyone has fever or if we want to exorcize a spirit, we try to give him curds made by a *Turuk* to eat. They say that in olden times one Mirza Turuk drove us from the country we were in. On a certain plain we made ready twelve carts and fled away across the open country. Mirza Turuk searched and could not find us. He thought: 'I must search for the tracks of twelve carts.' However, as we drove the twelve carts one behind the other, we made only one track, and so he never found us." The local Moslem population is very small[1] and confined to one or two villages of weavers and cultivators, who are themselves deeply affected by the Hindu environment. No doubt the story is very different in those districts of Northern Bengal where the Moslems predominate, but even there the great dissimilarity between Moslem and Santal culture probably militates against influences passing from the one to the other.

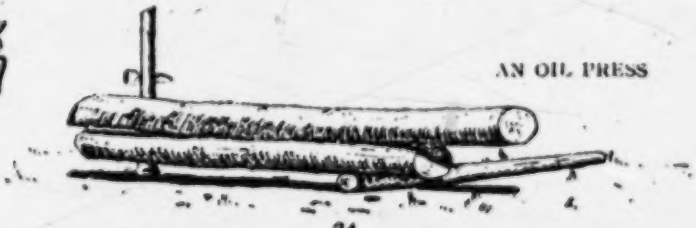
Christian influence, the result of a sustained and conscious effort on the part of missions, is considered later. Of deliberate efforts to Hinduize the religious practices and beliefs of the Santals the area is ignorant.

NOTE TO CHAPTER 2

The relation of the aboriginal peoples to Hindu society has given rise to much controversy and discussion in India, not all of which is conducted in a spirit of scientific inquiry. An able presentation of many of the facts dealt with in this and the previous chapter, together with much else, and written from the Hindu standpoint, can be found in *The Aborigines—"So-called"—and Their Future*, by G. S. Ghurye, Ph.D. (Cantab.), published by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, 1943.

[1] The figures given for the local Moslem population in 1931 were as follows:

	Males	*Females*
Ranibandh Thana	238	190
Raipore Thana	358	278



AN OIL PRESS

5: Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

797 The missionaries at Sarenga became familiar at a very early
• 648 stage with the facts of exploitation of the Santals. One result of this is that missionaries have been foremost in bringing and keeping the facts before the notice of the authorities. The evidence of missionaries is recorded in McAlpin's report.[1] Further direct measures have been taken to better the condition of the Santals both as tenants and as cultivators. During the period when the law was of little use as a safeguard of the rights of cultivators it seemed that the only way in which they could be helped was by acquiring landlord rights over the Santals and so
797 assuring them of a square deal. In the Santal Parganas and else-
423 where the Santal Mission of the Northern Churches has acquired a large *zemindari*, or estate, which includes a tea estate in Assam, as many of the Santals in its area migrated to the tea gardens. At Sarenga during the twenty years following the establishing of the mission, landlord rights in a number of small properties on which there were Santal tenants were acquired in order to save the Santals from eviction or from having to pay greatly enhanced rents. A later generation of missionaries has frequently had cause to wish that it could be freed from the burden of these commitments, but it is difficult to see how they could have been avoided if the people were to be helped in the one matter which affected their living more than any other. Though the situation today is very different, the tradition then established still leads Santals to look to the Christian Church for advice and
797 protection. "As the hot season proceeded", we read in one
73 report, "the hunger situation became serious for many people.
648 We were occupied with building work in the compound and a young men's confirmation class which we had for some weeks, but our thoughts were also taken up with the problem of getting famine relief of some kind or other. And anxiously looking for some efforts to be made by government to meet the tremendous need, we finally got information about the loan arrangement (the Land Improvement Loan Fund) advancing money for buying seed and thus giving hopes of a harvest the following autumn. Before the rains started this loan money was realized from the police stations, and every landowner was supposed to have a chance to receive some. But just returning from the hills we had the Santals coming into the compound in large numbers every day complaining that they were refused the loan help. After much consultation a deputation of some elected villagers

[1] M. C. McAlpin, *A Report on the Condition of the Santals in the Districts of Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapore and North Balasore*, Bengal Government, 1909.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

was sent to the Sub-Divisional Officer with a petition. The result was negative. After still more deliberation we went to Dumka and with our Secretary's help placed the petition before the Deputy Commissioner. This was immediately granted. A few days after this nearly two thousand more of the population in this area, 80 per cent. of which is stated to be Santals, got their little share of the promised loan."[1]

At Sarenga as elsewhere the necessary preoccupation with the problem of daily bread led to other developments in policy. In addition to becoming a landlord the mission also became a cultivator and employer of labour, thus being in a position to introduce improvements in farming methods to the people in a practical manner and not merely by preaching. Furthermore, something had to be done about the problem of debt that was crippling the Santals. Loans were granted to individuals, and in this matter, too, a later generation of missionaries, which is wise after the event, is inclined to question the wisdom of what was done. An attempt was made in the early years to give loans to cultivators at reasonable rates of interest through the organization of a grain bank, but most of the beneficiaries, unaccustomed to any but the most overbearing and unscrupulous behaviour from their moneylenders in the past, did not see the urgency of loan repayment, and in later years there has been an attempt to establish co-operatives on a sounder basis. Some of the loans given in the early years in order to save land for a family were on a scale that a subsequent generation that has had to try to realize them can only regard as inordinately lavish. The need for this kind of help has been greatly diminished since protective legislation came into force.

If missionaries were compelled to work for economic justice often against their will, they found other spheres open to them which they were eager to enter. Everywhere they have been the pioneers of education for the Santals; until recently they were almost the only agencies in the field. In the district of Midnapore the American Baptist Mission has, by a delegation of authority by the government, been almost solely responsible for the administration of funds and the supervision of schools. These range from the village primary school with a single teacher to a Santal High School for boys where they may sit for the matriculation examination of Calcutta University. In the Bankura district a missionary has always been a member of the Santal Education

[1] *The Seventy-Fifth Annual Report of the Santal Mission of the Northern Churches*, 1941, pp. 46–47.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

Board of the district, and from the beginning the mission sought to establish primary schools in the villages. Openings were found in centres either where some people had been baptized or where some of the influential villagers desired to see a school for the education of their children. The early period corresponded with an awareness, at least among a section of the Santals, that their boys should learn to read and write in order to be able to protect themselves; they were frequently discouraged by caste Hindus, most of whom in country areas may have felt quite sincerely that they were actuated by the highest motives. An old Santal related: "The *Deko* say to us, 'You cow-eaters, if you learn to read and write you will go blind', and many of our people, being simple, believe them." And so they turned readily to the missions who wished them to be educated. The government also found it convenient to rely on the help of missions and has made extensive educational work possible through grants. In the Bankura district Santal children can pass from their village schools to middle schools at Sarenga, and some have subsequently been able to go to High School and a mission College in the district town. At Sarenga a training school for village teachers trains the young men who staff the primary schools of the area. In spite of these efforts there has been disappointingly small progress towards literacy among the Santals. They remain largely indifferent to the type of education provided, for even in the remotest village the idea that the village school is merely a stepping-stone to further education has become deep rooted, and so the majority of the villagers cannot discover that the school is relevant to their needs. It is thought sufficient if two or three of the villagers are literate, for they can be relied on to help their illiterate companions. In the Bankura district the number of non-Christian girls who have attended the schools is very small, and none at all have so far attended the boarding school at Sarenga, although Christian and non-Christian boys mingle happily in the boys' school.

Medical work has likewise been prominent. The churches, which report to the Santal Christian Council, are responsible for seven general hospitals, five leper hospitals and a number of clinics. At Sarenga the arrival of a doctor in 1914 heralded the development of a hospital that now occupies a commanding site and brings healing to many thousands of patients, both Santal and non-Santal, every year. It is the centre of a nurses' training school where a number of Santal girls have qualified as trained nurses. While the hospital receives as many patients as can be